

LUDOVICO RONCALLI:

Sonata, Ottavo Tuono

(Suite in G-major)

by Craig H. Russell

In recent editions of *Soundboard*, I offered performing editions of several works by accomplished baroque guitarists such as Giovanni Battista Granata and François Le Cocq. Continuing in this series, this issue includes an arrangement for classical guitar of a complete suite by Ludovico Roncalli. The "Sonata, Ottavo Tuono" is the first of nine suites found in Roncalli's only known publication, the *Capricci Armonici sopra la Chitarra Spagnola* (Bergamo, 1692), pp. 1-7.¹

Roncalli's suites normally follow the order:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Preludio | |
| 2. Alemanda | |
| 3. Corrente | (missing in 2 suites) |
| 4. Gigue | (missing in 2 suites) |
| 5. Sarabanda | (missing in 2 suites) |
| 6. Gavotta | (present in 5 suites) |
| 7. Minuet | (present in 6 suites) |
| (Passacaglii) | (present only in 1 suite) |

Observe that the standardized "textbook" ordering of *allemande-courante-sarabande-gigue* is not present in any of Roncalli's suites. Note, for example, that he has the sarabande *following* the gigue instead of preceding it, and in no instance does he conclude the suite with a gigue. He opts instead to draw things to a close with either a gavotte, a minuet, or—in one instance—a

passacaglia. In truth, this ordering and these characteristics are much more common among Roncalli's fellow baroque guitarists than the supposed "standardized" ordering that freshmen music-majors are forced to carve indelibly into their memories. Other guitarists from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries such as Robert de Visée, François Campion, Henry Grenerin, and Santiago de Murcia preferred concluding their suites with a gavotte or minuet. Roncalli is thus hardly anomalous. I bring up this point because many recording artists repeatedly cut apart suites and repaste them together in the "correct" order as if the composer, in his ignorant confusion, had somehow gotten it all wrong. I urge performers to play the pieces in the order that Roncalli intended—he knew what he was doing and does not need any "fixing"!

Roncalli is imaginative and varied in his ornamentation. He liberally sprinkles in expected ornaments such as slurs, vibrato, mordents, and trills. The modern guitarist should be reminded that in most cases, baroque trills should be prepared—that is, the upper neighbor to the notated pitch should be struck on the strong part of the beat even though there is no visible indication of this upper neighbor on the page itself: the guitarist should then "pull-off" to the main note and execute the trill's repercussions. When time permits, the performer should exit the warbling of the trill's repercussions by striking in

anticipation the same pitch that will follow on the heels of the trill. (For a few notated examples, see the second page of the "Preludio.") Of course, *schneider* trills that have only one curt repercussion (omitting the preparatory upper neighbor altogether) are also allowable and appropriate when used judiciously. They sound quite pleasant, for instance, when applied to the trills in measures 7 and 8 of the "Corrente."

Of great interest are Roncalli's cross-string trills in the "Alemanda" where he executes the trill's repercussions on two different strings—as opposed to obtaining the two pitches on the same string by hammering-on and pulling-off. Wherever possible, I have tried to preserve this effect by similarly fingering Roncalli's cross-string trills on two separate strings.

A curious compound ornament is found in the "Corrente" (measure 4 after the double bar). Roncalli notates a lower-note appoggiatura on the third string against a trill on the open second string. Although Roncalli's intentions are anything but clear, I feel an accurate—even elegant—rendition of this ornament is achieved by striking the appoggiatura on string three simultaneously against the open second, and then immediately executing a single-repercussion trill by hammering-on and pulling-off on the open second that is already sounding. The resulting ornament resembles a 'turn' in its contour and rhythm, but has the added pungent bite of the initial appoggiatura. (See the musical example at the bottom of page 2 of the "Corrente.")

Other Performance Observations

Roncalli indicates an arpeggiated G-chord at the beginning of the "Preludio" which can be executed in a number of ways. For one sample realization, consult the notated example at the bottom of page 1 of the "Preludio." The "Alemanda" is particularly graceful if one applies the lilting elegance of *notes inégales* to the sixteenth notes; i.e., gently "swing" each pair of sixteenth notes so that the first is slightly longer than its companion that follows. In phrasing the melodic lines of the "Corrente," pay attention to the ambivalent metric changes between 3/4 and 6/8 time.

I have added a *petite reprise* indication to the "Gavotta." To perform a *petite reprise* one takes all written repeats and then plays the very last phrase once more (the beginning of which is marked with a special symbol). The *petite reprise* was a structural feature of French binary-dance movements, including gavottes. Even when a *petite reprise* is not notated, its addition is appropriate: the performer can add a *petite reprise* to any of the other movements in this suite if he or she feels so inclined. Also, I offer an alternate arrangement of the "Gavotta's" final phrase that can be used in the repeat or the *petite reprise*.

Similar types of changes can be applied to the other movements.

Take care to play the "Gavotta" at a brisk tempo. Too many performers lumber along through gavottes when they should instead play with the verve and energy of a gigue—but in duple meter. Also, if the guitarist immediately silences the strings after playing the "Gavotta's" final chord, the effect is quite stunning, with the abrupt silence following fast on the heels of the sonorous strum. It is a far more effective way to close the suite than to let the final chord fade mushily into the sunset.

Editorial Procedure

I should remind the reader that my arrangement of the suite is only that—an *arrangement* and not a transcription. Given the peculiarities of re-entrant tuning on the baroque guitar and its low-tension gut strings, many of the effects that are possible on that instrument are not reproducible on its modern 6-string cousin. For instance, the elegant interplay between strummed chords and plucked notes that is so enchanting on the baroque guitar can sound extremely clumsy on the modern guitar (even in the hands of a superb performer). I have therefore chosen to replace many of the strummed chords with plucked ones, especially in the "Alemanda" and the "Sarabanda." In addition, I have utilized the bass strings of the modern guitar—even though they are absent on the baroque guitar. The resulting changes in fingerings have sometimes necessitated the omission of a trill or mordent in Roncalli's tablature, or conversely, have suggested an additional ornament not found in the original. My hope in providing this arrangement is not to provide a rigid and historically accurate version of Roncalli's suite, but merely to spark an interest in his music among modern guitarists by providing a playable, idiomatic rendition for the six-string guitar. The serious guitarist is encouraged to consult the original tablature and develop his own arrangement of the piece. Or better still, buy a baroque guitar and play it as Roncalli intended!

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¹ Roncalli, *Capricci Armonici*, facsimile edition with an intro. by Michael Macmeeken (Monaco: Editions Chanterelle, 1979). The table of contents for the *Capricci Armonici* has nine headings, but it may actually contain *ten* suites, given that the order of movements of the suite in "Primo Tuono" suggests a subdivision into two autonomous works. The first suite would have the movements: Preludio, Alemanda, Gigue, Minuet. The second would consist of: Alemanda, Corrente, Sarabanda.

Sonata, Ottavo Tuono (1692)

(Suite in G-major)

1. Preludio

Ludovico Roncalli
arr. by Craig H. Russell

The musical score is written for guitar on a single staff in G major (one sharp). It includes various musical notations such as treble clef, common time (C), and dynamic markings like *vib.*, *p*, and *pp*. Above the staff, fingerings are indicated with letters (l, a, m, i, p) and numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4). Fret numbers are written below the staff. The score is divided into several measures, some of which are marked with an asterisk (*). The final measure of the prelude is marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

*
Arpeggiate G-major Chord:
For Example

Trills: 1) normally should be prepared by playing the upper neighbor on the strong beat

Examples:

Alemanda

Corrente

2) When time permits, close the trill with an anticipation of the next pitch

Sarabanda

2. Alemanda

8

B3 B7

8

tr m B8 B7 B5

8

B2 m B2

8

B2

8

The musical score consists of five staves of music in G major (one sharp). The notation includes various guitar-specific techniques and markings:

- Staff 1:** Features a sequence of chords and notes with fingering (1, 2, 4, 3, 3, 1, 0, 1) and fret numbers (9, 3, 0). Chord diagrams for B2 are shown above the staff.
- Staff 2:** Includes trills (tr) and slurs. Chord diagrams for B2 and B7 are shown above the staff. Fingering (2, 1, 0, 3, 2, 0, 1, 1, 2, 4, 2, 1) and fret numbers (1, 3, 4, 1, 2, 4, 2, 1) are indicated.
- Staff 3:** Features a trill (tr) and slurs. Chord diagrams for B2 and B7 are shown above the staff. Fingering (4, 2, 1, 2, 2, 0, 4, 0, 1, 3, 3, 1) and fret numbers (1, 3, 0, 2, 3, 1) are indicated.
- Staff 4:** Includes trills (tr) and slurs. Chord diagrams for B2 and B7 are shown above the staff. Fingering (1, 3, 2, 2, 0, 4, 1, 0, 3, 1, 3, 1) and fret numbers (2, 4, 0, 2, 1, 3, 1) are indicated.
- Staff 5:** Features a trill (tr) and slurs. Chord diagrams for B2 and B7 are shown above the staff. Fingering (1, 1, 1, 4, 3, 1, 3, 2, 3, 4, 0, 0, 1) and fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 0, 0, 1) are indicated.

3. Corrente

The main score consists of six staves of music in G major (one sharp). The notation includes various guitar-specific techniques and fingerings:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a series of chords and single notes with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4). Trills (tr) are indicated over several notes. A double bar line with a repeat sign is present.
- Staff 2:** Continues the melodic line with trills and fingerings. A double bar line with a repeat sign is present.
- Staff 3:** Features a trill (tr) and a double bar line with a repeat sign.
- Staff 4:** Continues the melodic line with trills and fingerings.
- Staff 5:** Continues the melodic line with trills and fingerings.
- Staff 6:** Ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

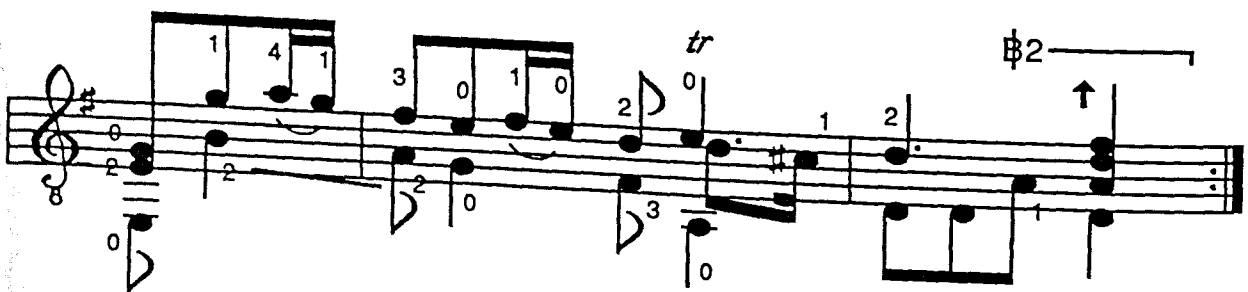
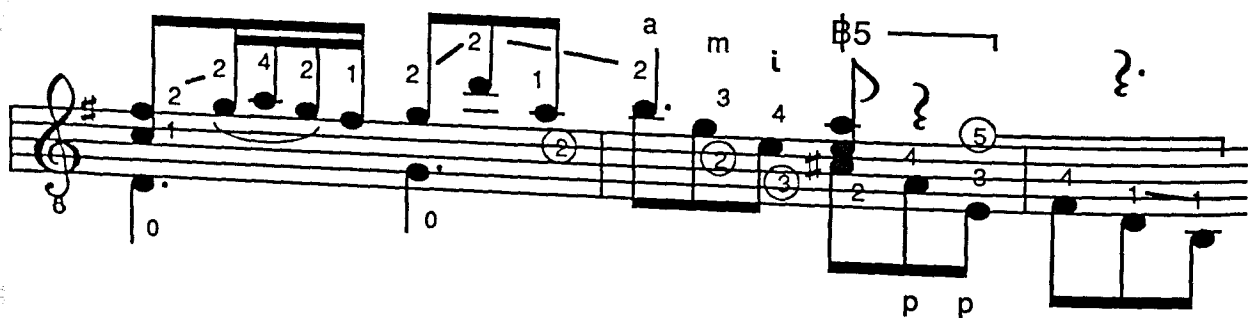
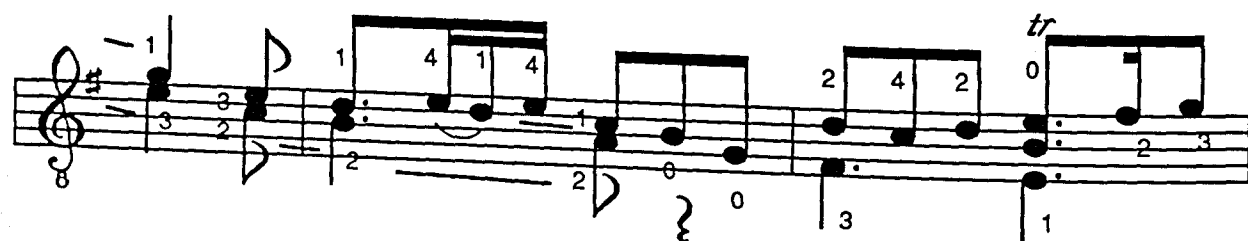
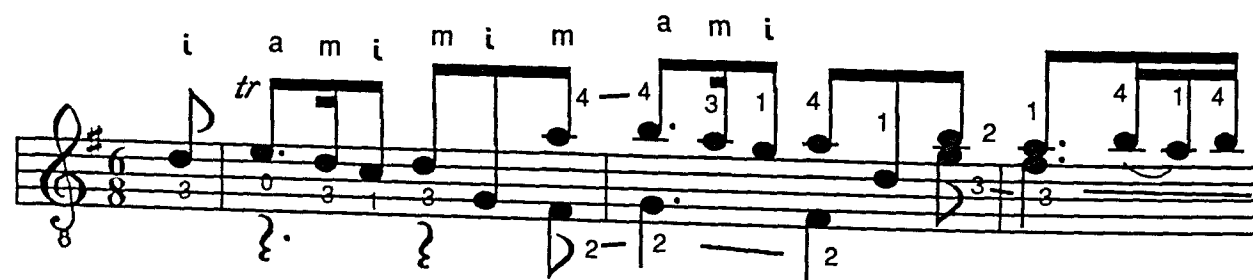
* Performed: 1) hammer-on, 3rd string 2) hammer-on, then pull-off, 2nd string (sustain 3rd string)

This notation shows a hammer-on on the 3rd string, with a circled 3 indicating the third fret.

This notation shows a hammer-on and pull-off on the 2nd string, with a circled 2 indicating the second fret.

This notation shows the result of the performance instruction, which is a sustained note on the 3rd string.

4. Gigua



The musical score is written for guitar in G major (one sharp, F#) and 6/8 time. It consists of five systems of notation. The first system includes the lyrics "a m i m i a" above the notes. The notation includes various guitar-specific symbols such as fret numbers (0-4), accidentals (sharps), slurs, trills (tr.), vibrato (vib.), and dynamic markings (p, f). The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

5. Sarabanda

The musical score for "5. Sarabanda" is written for guitar in a key of one sharp (F#) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The notation includes various fingerings (1-4), slurs, and trills (tr). The first staff begins with a B3 note. The second staff includes a trill (tr) and a fermata. The third staff includes a trill (tr) and a fermata. The fourth staff includes a trill (tr) and a fermata. The fifth staff includes a trill (tr) and a fermata. The score is written in a style typical of classical guitar notation, with a focus on technical precision and musical expression.

o. Gavotta

The main musical score for 'o. Gavotta' consists of six staves of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, along with fingerings (0-4) and trills (tr). Above the first staff, the letters 'i m i m i m' are written. Above the second staff, 'a i m i m' is written. Above the fourth staff, 'm i' is written. Above the fifth staff, 'm i' is written. Above the sixth staff, 'm i' is written. The score includes a repeat sign in the second staff and a trill sign in the fourth staff.

Alternate version for the 2nd repeat, or petite reprise

The alternate version for the 2nd repeat, or petite reprise, is a single staff of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, along with fingerings (0-4) and trills (tr). Above the staff, the letters 'm i' are written. The staff includes a trill sign and a repeat sign.